

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Archie R. Cole Middle School Library

100 Cedar Avenue

East Greenwich, RI 02818

6:05 p.m. Executive Session, Mr. Osborne made a motion to go into executive session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under Rhode Island General Laws §42-46-4 and §42-46-5, (a) (2) Litigation update: Lamendola v. Town of EG, et al.; Custodial negotiations; (a) (3) Report on School Security/Safety. Dr. Sun seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

Those in attendance were Ms. Carolyn Mark, Chair; Dr. Deidre Gifford, Vice-Chair; Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters; Mr. Clark Smith; Dr. Yan Sun; Mr. David Osborne; and Mr. Michael Fain.

Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent and Mrs. Gail Wilcox, Director of Administration were also in attendance.

7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting

I. Call to Order

Ms. Mark called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

III. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

IV. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular and Executive for April 7, 2015

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Dr. Gifford, the Committee voted

7-0 to approve the regular and executive minutes.

V. Recognition

a. Cole Chess Team

On a motion by Mr. Smith, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 7-0 to add this recognition to the agenda. The Cole Chess team was congratulated on winning the R.I. Middle School Scholastic League Championship and the School Blitz Championship. Team members were presented with citations from State Representative Giarrusso.

VI. Superintendent's Report

The curriculum forum has been changed to May 12th at 6:30 p.m. in the high school library/media center. The strategic planning forum will take place on April 30th at

7:00 p.m. in the Cole library. A webinar regarding dual enrollment will take place this week. This was part of Governor Raimondo's initiatives. EGHS administration and department chairs have been asked to participate. The Board of Education wants policy in place on or before June 30, 2015 regarding dual enrollment. A template for the policy will be provided to the Policy Committee. Congratulations to the Cole and EGHS students who placed third in the Science Olympiad. There are several recognitions scheduled for next week.

VII. School Committee Concerns

There were no concerns.

VIII. Action Items

a. Parental leave-Caroline Bradshaw, Guidance Counselor, Cole

On a motion by Mr. Fain, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 7-0 to table this item until the next meeting.

b. Approval of School Calendar for 2015-2016

Dr. Mercurio answered several questions regarding state testing that is typically scheduled in March. This year PARCC computer-based testing took place between March 16-April 10, 2015 and paper-based March 23-April 3, 2015. A technology assessment was done March 2-March 27, 2015 for 8th graders. Dr. Mercurio noted the district does not have feedback from RIDE regarding latitude in regards to testing dates. Therefore, he is reluctant to change a school vacation to March. Mrs. Winters discussed input from students' during the last meeting where they explained the need for the February break. Mrs. Winters stated she would vote "no" on the school calendar if the break were removed. Ms. Mark summarized the proposed recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee. The Committee discussed adding back in the February break, which would add three additional days to the end of the school year. The last day would be June 16, 2016 and the four make-up days would run until June 22, 2016. Dr. Gifford discussed concerns surrounding the fragmented school year with the breaks in February and April. Mr. Osborne made a motion to reinstate the February vacation (add three days back in); tack three days on to the end of the school year; agree that the School Committee will lobby statewide officials (and colleagues in

other districts) to allow for more flexibility regarding holidays, election days, and timing of vacation weeks; agree that the School Committee will lobby RIDE to allow for two-hour delays to cut down on the number of snow days. Mr. Osborne noted the FY2017 calendar would include two days missed due to the election. The Committee would like to survey students and parents to see how they spend February break to assist in planning next year. Dr. Gifford noted she would like to shorten the February break and Mr. Fain stated he is in favor of a single break in March. Mrs. Winters seconded the motion, which passed 6-1 (Dr. Gifford voted no). The Ad Hoc Committee was thanked for their time and effort to compile the report for the School Committee.

IX. Discussion

a. Budget FY2016

A follow-up meeting with the Town Council is scheduled for May 4, 2015. The Town Council needs to adopt a budget by May 15, 2015.

b. Strategic Planning

A forum is planned for Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Cole library. A survey regarding strategic planning was sent out to the community yesterday. The survey will go out again on Friday's list serv and a link will be added to the Superintendent's Field Memo. Strategic Planning will remain on future agendas as a placeholder.

c. School Start Times

At the last School Committee meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee presented several recommendations/fiscal implications. Ms. Deb Murphy, Ocean State Transit, was present to answer questions

regarding bus schedules. Mrs. Winters explained how option #1 has younger students being released at 3:45 p.m., which will have them dropped off late and possibly in the dark. Mr. Osborne stated his preference is option #2 (two-tier), but with the cost factor of \$143,000, it is not an option for FY2016. Dr. Mercurio noted there are contractual issues related to collapsing the school schedule and concerns regarding scheduling (Cole and EGHS) that would need review when looking at potential schedule changes. Ms. Murphy was thanked for her assistance working with the Ad Hoc Committee. Mrs. Winters discussed concerns (safety, snow) with two-tier bussing in the Tillinghast area. Ms. Murphy stated Cole and EGHS could start at 8:00 a.m. and it would not cause issues for the elementary schools. She said all elementary students could be dismissed at the same time. Several of the elementary principals discussed their dismissal procedures and the time it takes to dismiss. Dr.

Gifford would like the district to choose an option for a future year and start planning for it now. Mr. Cobain was asked if there would be additional bussing costs if the EGHS pushes back dismissal time. He said there would be additional costs, but did not know how much.

Mr. Cobain discussed challenges for games, practice, planning, and the costs related to a later dismissal time. Mr. Podraza discussed contractual concerns regarding the Wednesday schedule. Ms. Mark asked Committee members to review the options and contact Dr. Mercurio if additional information is needed to make a decision.

Several parents, students, teachers, administrators, and members of the Ad Hoc Committee were present to voice their

concerns/preferences regarding the options.

X. Advisory/Subcommittee Updates

a. Mental Health Subcommittee

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. The subcommittee is working with stakeholders in the district to raise awareness. Information on upcoming activities will be listed on this week's list serv and Superintendent's Field Memo. The subcommittee is working on program assessment across the district and also collecting information on programs in place and recommended changes. The data collection group is working to improve systems for tracking students who benefit from a coordinated approach from mental health professionals in the buildings/district.

b. EGSEAC

Ms. Patty Harwood, EGSEAC, provided a summary of the April 15th meeting and noted minutes will be posted on the EGSD website. During the meeting, Mr. Wilson presented the second draft of the classroom observation policy, which needs to be reviewed by the Policy Committee. Transportation concerns were also discussed. The group noted they requested a meeting with the bus company, but has not received a response. The EGSEAC is interested in developing a parent engagement survey and also would like a member to serve on the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee. The last meeting of the school year is June 2, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. in the central office with a report at the

June 16, 2015 School Committee meeting. The last Cole unified basketball game is Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 3:30 p.m.

XI. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Gifford, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn at 9:36 p.m.

CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO

SECRETARY